An Expoſtulatorie (but friendly) Adhortation to that part of the Miniſtry of England, *who (being true to the Doctrine) are not yet reconciled to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church.*

I Have paſſed a double ſcore of years in a Station that afforded me ſome opportunity to diſcern, and with inclinations that ſuffer'd me not to be unconcern'd, for what befell the Church of God in this Nation. There hath nothing been (all along) my buſineſs more, than to underſtand, both the poſitions and demeanure of the Old Puritan; betwixt whom, and the Hierarchie, the differences were then conſpicuous; but not as I conceiv'd of much ſcandal; for during the firſt fourth part of that time, there was ſcarce, either the Denomination of Non-Conformity, or the practice. Their Doctrinal Tenets were never arrain'd as diſcrepant from our *Eſtabliſh't Articles*, whatever their private Notions (as to Ceremonies and Forms) were, they exhibited thereto more than paſſive Obedience; and an utter abhorrence of Common-Prayer they were ſo far from; that (on the ordinary Holy-dayes) when there was no more enjoyn'd but the uſing of it, and calling the people together for that end) they thought it not out of ſeaſon to be inſtant with their Auditors in other parts of the Miniſterial Office, and added

Sermons to the Service. They were content (though perhaps they would not have choſen them) to put on the enjoyned ſorts of Habit, and Dreſs, rather then not preach the Goſpel of Chriſt. 'Tis true, when that Book which gave the Rein to the Vulgar (who are too apt to take Head of themſelves) and ſome Liberty (yet no Command) for Recreations, on the Lords-day was to be publiſhed; ſundry of them quitted their preſent charge, quietly withdrawing to beyond the Seas: but I remember not, that they gathered Churches, or maintain'd (publickly) any worſhip (within the bowels of this Kingdome) by Law prohibited: Others of them (who were no leſs tenderly conſcientious than the former) weather'd out that ſtorm, kept their ſtations, and by the humility of their deportment, or candidneſs of their Addreſs, found means not to come under the wrath of the Magiſtrate; except, ſome three or four, that (for certain immoderate, and ill-tim'd publications) were ſomewhat roughly dealt withall. I am fully perſwaded (in the general) they only lifted up their hands with Prayers and Tears (the Chriſtians beſt weapons) to the God of Heaven, for the removal of ſuch things, as (they judged) were burthenſome: And, that they had never lifted up an Arm of Fleſh, in oppoſition to the power ſet over them by Heaven; if a fatal co-incidence of temporal, no leſs than ſpiritual concerns, had not melted down the Reſolutions of thoſe Times, ſo as there came out (beyond expectation) a *Parliament*, * a *Parliament*, which claim'd (even at firſt daſh) a right of dividing (at leaſt) the Empire with our *Cæſar*: And indeed, thoſe prætenſions (ſupported by a jealouſie, which a connivance towards all, and the activity of ſome Romaniſts had occaſion'd) were ſo managed, as might leſſen the wonder, if ſome perſons, even of ſincere intentions, were

* Exod. 32. 24.

con-

conſcientiouſly led into a miſtake of Duty. I ſpeak it knowingly, many of you would have parted with your right-eyes (when the diſmal conſequences of that breach were within view) to have obviated the miſchief; And when the appointed time was drawing on, wherein God had determined to bring home our King, you were not behind with your ſeaſonable and vigorous Aſſiſtances: Though you could peradventure have been well pleaſed, to have underſtood the length and breadth of that Univerſal regard held forth towards tender Conſciences; yet when you did not find it prævioufly aſcertain'd, you would not leave the main work at a ſtand for all that, but helpt it forward by all poſſible and proper means: Notwithſtanding the many Invectives which have been thrown (at randome) againſt you, I cannot think that *Hacket* and *Cartwright* (in remoter dayes, or *Peters* and *Calamy* in our own) acted upon the ſame principles; nor that the Original of thoſe woful diſſentions (differing ſentiments I would rather term them) took birth meerly from obſtinacy; for our Reformed Religion was but lately planted here, and the Law for Uniformity (however fit) could not have ſpread its root ſo far and deep, as that (like the Laws of God) it ſhould oblige all (*Engliſh*) men, at all times and in all places; nor was it yet become (like thoſe of the *Medes* and *Perſians*) unalterable; when Doctor *Coxe*, who could have no Juriſdiction over his poor exil'd Countrey-men (taken in at *Franckford* about a year before, under a condition that they ſhould not vary from the *French* Church for fear of diviſions) would needs rule alone there, and force the *Engliſh* Liturgie upon them; a thing, that Dr. *Storie* (though himſelf a Biſhop) thought not fit to attempt; hence animoſities and heats, which in more then the lapſe of an hundred years cannot be allay'd or cool'd: I find Doctor *Coxe*

every where well character'd, as a veſſel well fraught with Learning; and Piety, but, a little over-hung with the ſayles of an high-ruſſling Spirit, which rendred him obnoxious to the violent guſts of his own paſſion; and probably the intemperance of his actings, drew from *Calvin*, thoſe Diminutions, he put upon the *Common-Prayer-Book*, which had elſe never been heard of: yet note we here in paſſing, that moſt of the paſſages in it, whereon he thought fit to faſten the term of *Inept* (only 'tis likely) becauſe he apprehended them unapt) have ſince, upon review, been taken off to ſo good a degree, as his ſucceſſour *Beza* found nothing in the ſubſtance of it, or the Dependent Rites; whereto the intervention of the Magiſtrates Command, ought not to oblige (even the conſcience) by actual obedience. It was a truly Chriſtian frame the *Geneva-Engliſh* put upon themſelves, when they obſerved, God (by drying up the *Red Sea* of blood, which had flowed here) to be opening a way for them towards their own land, by Letters to their Brethren diſperſed throughout *Germany*, they ſued for reconciliation, and enſued peace, even with thoſe who had ſupplanted them at, and drove them from *Frankford*; Nay, I can (me thinks) eaſily pardon the importunities wherewith after their return, they ſollicited our Governours, whil'ſt the things in controverſie might ſeem to be (yet) *ſub Judice*, and under Debate: But, now, the caſe is ſo much alter'd, That there is,

1. *No reaſon but to Obey:*
2. *No neceſſity of Diſobedience.*

Conſider (I beſeech you) whether, All you have ſaid, or writ to juſtifie your ſeparation, can ſignifie any thing, unleſs what you take offence at, were propoſed, either

1. *As*

1. *As, Essential parts of worship,*
or,
2. *As, Conferring Grace.*

Truly, I have all-a-long (without prejudice, nay, with inclinations tending toward you) consulted some of your persons, and most of your Books, yet am altogether of this mind, that the falling-short herein hath unpointed all your Arguments; The very Imposers themselves having made (a thousand times) as ample and as clear Declaration (in reference to both) as can possibly come from the mouth of man, That,

1. To Ordain such a multitude of Ceremonies, as would employ most of our thoughts or care, in time of Divine Service, how to do them aright (which seems to have been the very state and posture of the dayes St. *Augustine* lived in, yet he brake down no gap, nor leap't out from the fold) deserves really the name of superstition.

2. To make any of them an essential part of Worship, or attribute to them the power of obtaining pardon for Us, or working Grace in Us, were direct Irreligion.

3. To make the Apostolical, or in themselves necessary commands, that bind the Conscience so, as all the Laws of God do, were down-right presumption.

They readily grant, that to Constitute a new object of worship (suppose, by invocation of Saints or Angels;) That to institute a new part of worship (suppose by addition to the number of Sacraments) is not in the Churches prerogative. All they affirm of Rites or Ceremonies, is, but that they may be occasional motives, or remembrancers of Devotion; and what can remain (after such Concessions) worthy so fatal an opposition? If others find them

them ſo, why may not I (if a Miniſter) uſe them? (If a Lay-man be preſent at them? though I find not, they have that tendency upon my Spirit. Nay, I will go one ſtep further, and affirm; 'Tis poſſible that the Governours of the Church may be culpable in the Seaſon, Manner, Meaſures, or nature of their injunctions, and yet the members of that Church indiſpenſibly bound to a compliance. Seriouſly, I would not beſpeak (for this ſort of things) in any bodies apprehenſion a room beyond their due value; but to me 'tis very clear, that there is no leſs (yea more) of ſuperſtition, in ſaying, They may not be uſed (upon the account of Conſcience) then in ſaying; They ſhall be uſed (meerly upon the account of Order, Decency, and Obedience.) In their own nature they are (by *Calvin's* judgement) tolerable; in *Beza's* (being ſtampt with Authority) Obligatory; and ſince own'd no otherwiſe, than as Ordinances of men, they may ſeem to be the direct aime of thoſe two Texts, *Rom.* 13. 5. and 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. Doubtleſs, the Spouſe of Chriſt would be no leſs lovely, if ſome abatements (according to your deſire) were made; but, will you ſcratch and wound her face, becauſe they who have the care of her Attire, eſteem thoſe as beauty-ſpots, which you think only black patches? or becauſe, they judge thoſe well-ſuited ornaments, which cannot (in your opinion) paſs for better than gaudie, will you make an irreparable rent, in that garment which ſhould have no ſeam? Certainly, if (in ſome caſes) we ought to part with much for peace-ſake, we may (in this) retain much too, eſpecially, ſince our Duty is apparently ſuper-added to conveniencie. And he that hath taken upon him that Honourable Function (to which a wo is fixed, if he preach not) quits not himſelf like a man (nay comes not off like a good and faithful ſervant) if he get into the Cellar, when he ſhould be on his watch at the houſe top; or whiſper

whiſper in ſome corner, when he ſhould lift up his voice like a trumpet. I know many of you, whom I dare not but think to be men of Holy ſincere intentions, and yet I am (verily) perſwaded, ſin lies at your doors upon this very account: If it be true (which I do not ſay nor think) That the moſt part of the Conforming Clergy are remiſs, negligent, dry, perfunctorie in their offices; why, then (by the mercies of God, by the bowells of Chriſt) be intreated (nay take heed how you do it not) to put in your ſickles into the harveſt; and ſuffer not the Lords people to periſh for want of food; which you cannot (in the poſture you have choſen) diſpenſe unto them without diſadvantage, without ſcandal, without crime: Thus you will diſappoint all thoſe (many) that have evil will to *Zion*; Thus you will fruſtrate the expectation of all ſuch, as could find in their hearts, that your voyces ſhould never (more) be heard in this land; And, whereas (now) they ſpeak evil of you as of evil-doers, they will (then) be aſhamed that falſly accuſe your good Converſation in Chriſt; doubt not but in whatſoever (neceſſary things) the preſent ſettlement hath come ſhort; the great and wiſe diſpoſer (above) will find means (when we are ready for ſo great a mercy) to perfect all that concerns his own, or peoples intereſt, without engaging any of them to do evil (or what hath the appearance of evil) *That Good may come thereof.*

I wiſh my Pen were enabled (before I conclude) to releaſe you from an infirmity (under which, ſome of you have been bowed down, for almoſt Thirty years;) I mean, the *Covenant*: And (verily) I have heard great Caſuiſts affirm, That, if the matter of the Oath be unlawful, not within our own (juſt) Power, or impoſed by an Unjuſt Authority; There needs nothing, but the ſuppleing waters of Repentance, to diſſolve its bands.

It

It is not (I ſuppoſe) of any importance, whether this Addreſs be at all Subſcrib'd or no; yet (being not willing to impoſe upon the Reader a fictitious Name, and altogether indifferent, whether mine be known) I ſhall leave him to his choice, whether he will give himſelf the trouble of unfolding, what a Reverend Miniſter (now with God) took the pains to lap-up in an

ANAGRAM,

Our Chriſt will helpe.

He's ours, and therefore will, He's Chriſt, and can Help: when, in vain is all the Help of Man.

FINIS.